

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Figs. 3a, 3b and 3c have been amended to include the reference numerals required by the Examiner.

A replacement sheet containing Figs. 3a, 3b and 3c has been attached hereto as Appendix A.

Appendix A: Figs. 3a, 3b and 3c

REMARKS

Reconsideration in light of the following amendments and remarks is respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-18 are pending.

Claims 1-18 stand rejected.

Claims 1, 4, 6-8, 10, 13, and 15-17 are objected to.

Claims 1, 4, 6-8 and 10 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants would like to thank for the indication that claims 10-18 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 10-18 would be allowed if amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph.

Objections to the Claims

Claims 1, 4, 6-8, 10, 13 and 15-17 are objected to for informalities. These claims have been amended pursuant to the Examiner's suggestions.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 10-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112. The Examiner states that claim 10 is indefinite because the it is unclear how both the shaft joint body and recessed portion can have a recess into which just one projection fits. Claims 11-18 depend from claim 10 and therefore also stand rejected as being indefinite.

Claim 10 has been amended to recite "projections, wherein both the shaft joint body and the locking body have a recessed portion into which a projection is fitted." Accordingly, claim 10 is no longer indefinite and is patentable. Claims 11-18 are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 10. Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,474,898 to Aota et al. ("Aota") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,155,739 to Sekine et al. ("Sekine"). The Examiner states that Aota discloses most of the features of the claimed invention, but admits that Aota does not disclose a supported portion with a projection in contact with the coupling shaft. The Examiner relies on Sekine as disclosing a supported portion with a projection. The Examiner contends that it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to combine Aota and Sekine to create the claimed invention.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite "a projection incised into at least one of the shaft joint and locking body." In contrast, the recess 204a in nut 204 of Sekine, provides space such that the inclined protrusion 205d of Sekine does not incise into the nut (or the yoke 101.) Thus, the combination of Aota and Sekine do not disclose all the features of claim 1.

Further amended claim 1 recites "a flexible member for guiding a positioning recess of the shaft body into the shaft joint." Neither Aota nor Sekine disclose a flexible member or a corresponding recess in the shaft body. Thus, the combination of Aota and Sekine lack an additional feature of claim 1.

For the foregoing reasons, claim 1 is patentable over the combination of Aota and Sekine. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

CONCLUSION

Each and every point raised in the Office Action dated April 4, 2006 has been addressed on the basis of the above remarks. In view of the foregoing it is believed that claims 1-18 are in condition for allowance and it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all pending claims be allowed and the case passed to issue. A prompt and favorable action in that regard is earnestly solicited.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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